

A NEW YORK NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT... The Story of Admiral John



On one of these bits of wreckage a man was climbing.

STANBOROUGH and I were sitting at a marble topped table in a certain French restaurant of downtown New York frequented by a queer medley of business men, writers, Argentinians and retiring elderly fellows who read the Parisian journals and order and swallow the wines from the proprietor's cellar. I like the place. It is much more respectable than the resorts that Stanborough usually frequents to gratify his taste for romance.

We had reached dessert when a man who had the aspect of a successful broker with an office, say, six blocks below the restaurant, entered the south door and made his way leisurely between the tables. Stanborough, who was eating a bombe glacee discontentedly, didn't see him until he was close upon us. Then he jumped up.

"Sherwood," he exclaimed with delight, "sit down with us!" he commanded, and he went through the form of making us acquainted: "Mr. Sherwood—Mr. Lupton."

The impersonator of a successful broker seemed agreeably and seating himself, hastened to assure Henri, the waiter, that he would have no dinner, but would be glad to have an ice and coffee.

"I am just back from my vacation—a cruise in the Caribbean," he told Stanborough. "And I picked up a good story that I want to tell you."

"There never was a better time than now," Stanborough returned. "You will redeem an unpromising evening if the story is really good. And as for Lupton, he will enjoy it, although he may not be willing to say so."

I was about to protest against this intimation that I begrudge my pleasures. I don't. My taste is not so bizarre as Stanborough's and I don't like to go to a lot of messy places to graze. It's that's all. But my friend went on:

"Lupton has a great virtue in that he can be trusted never to tell anything. So let's have the story."

Well, if I do say it, the compliment was deserved. My diary, where I am penning these lines, is the sole record of Stanborough's escapades. I'm not sure of the sort that can put a thing down on paper and forget it. So I have only to burn these pages to have a clean slate.

Sherwood, with a thoughtful air, was eating the ice Henri had brought. "All right," he said, "I'll tell you the thing as it happened. Of course, some parts of it are mere hearsay, some parts are a historical record. And still other parts, the most important of all, I have built up for myself from the outlines I got hold of. Call it invention if you like."

"The good times," he said, "were in Costa Blanca, the seaport and capital of the republic of that name. Have either of you ever been there? No? Then I shall find it difficult to make you appreciate the wildness of the adjacent coast."

"There are steep cliffs from which fragments have been spilled to the ocean bed for miles along. A terrific surf boils about these rocks. Only at Costa Blanca do the cliffs leave an opening of a few miles. Passing through this gap you enter a placid and beautiful harbor with a sandy beach and a city of low, white buildings inhabited by Spaniards, Indians and the blend of both which constitutes most of the citizenship of the republic. There are very few foreigners, for as yet Costa Blanca is not a place of commercial importance."

"A few days after the capture of Costa Blanca by the ragged but expert troops of Gen. Madreno a supply ship from the United States, the *Albatross*, was on the coast. The troops of the King of Spain would have to depend on long and perilous transportation overland through the passes of the Cordilleras."

Madreno's watchers on the cliffs saw her approach and there was much premature rejoicing in the revolutionists' camp over the prospect of taking a ship (the nucleus for a navy) and getting food and munitions intended for the enemy. Especially food. The Army of Liberation was in danger of starvation.

"Imagine, then, the wrath and despair of the watchers when in a tremendous storm that blew up without an hour's warning, the supply ship lost every shred of canvas and was impaled on one of the sentinel rocks at the very mouth of the harbor."

"My good fortune he was carried fairly close to shore. To the surprise of all, abandoning his refuge he sprang into the breakers. At this critical moment of the battle, the fiercest outburst of Gen. Madreno crossed themselves poorly. But in a moment the man reappeared, battling through the surge."

"It was evident that he was a fellow of prodigious strength. Three times he was carried back and sucked under the fourth time he got close enough to shore to grasp and in some inconceivable way climb to a small rock which was sufficiently large to furnish protection on its landward side from the worst

foes. After a period of clinging repose in the lee of this rock, where his great chest could be seen heaving as he recovered breath for a renewed effort, the solitary survivor swam ashore. "He was immediately made a prisoner, and being a common sailor, a native of a Spanish province and therefore an alien enemy, condemned to be shot. But his struggle for life, so gallantly successful, had been seen and admired by Gen. Madreno's daughter, who interceded with her father for the man's life."

"The General's daughter was the commander in chief's only child. Her father listened indulgently to her plea as the two stood in front of the big sailor, who, with downcast head, still trembled from the tremendous struggle to escape the sea. He hung his head because he thought that there must have been something impious in his effort to avoid drowning, since here he found himself about to face a firing squad. This sailor had a simple mind and that was as far as he thought about the matter."

"The General's daughter, with her dark eyes fixed on her father's face and with a persuasive smile on her lovely countenance, was pointing out to her father that a man of such strength as this outcast should make a valiant soldier. The General stroked her hair and ordered the prisoner's release."

"Perceiving suddenly that he was not to die and that this beautiful woman was his savior the big sailor knelt at her feet. He kissed the hem of her gown and muttered in Spanish of an unfamiliar dialect: 'I am your slave.'"

"A rifle was given him and he was told that he was a soldier in the Army of Liberation. His name appeared to be Juan something or other. He was at once named Josecito El Amante Juan. Admiral John. Thus his new life began with a loaded pistol and an empty stomach. For the Army of Liberation was still very short of food."

"El Amante Juan made a good soldier. He learned rapidly how to shoot, and especially on an empty stomach—and he had courage commensurate with his size and strength. He became a corporal, a sergeant. He exhibited so much courage that he was made a Lieutenant. And as he displayed also a fairly good intelligence he soon became a Captain."

"His exploits were many. They included cutting off an important supply train in the mountains and taking prisoner almost every one of the troops guarding it. To these men Admiral John gave a choice either they could stand up and be shot or they could join his company as common soldiers with the privilege of cutting off subsequent supply trains and filling the stomachs of the liberators. They all joined."

"And such was Admiral John's control over men—a control partly physical, but chiefly effective because of his spirit of humane and fair dealing—that almost every other supply train making its way through the crevices of the Cordilleras was captured; and very soon the forces of Gen. Madreno had almost exactly reversed position as regards the distressing matter of empty stomachs."

"The rise of Admiral John excited many jealousies, of which the bitterest was certainly that of Jorge Rodriguez."

Colonel under Gen. Madreno and suitor for his daughter's hand.

"The submissive devotion of Admiral John to Teresa Madreno and the big sailor's boundless gratitude to her for saving his life stirred in Col. Jorge Rodriguez a feeling that his soldier's heart, so that for days he was hardly able to execute properly his military duties. The conviction, which came to him in lucid intervals, that his intense jealousy was baseless only strengthened Rodriguez's hatred."

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to the mountains, where he effected a junction with the Spanish forces.

"Gen. Madreno, alarmed by this defection, advanced shortly afterward with his main force against the enemy, sending his daughter under a small escort to a point inland. Admiral John was sent with some men to guard a pass through which the Spanish troops, if defeated, might be expected to retreat."

"Before Gen. Madreno had come up with the enemy Col. Jorge had learned, through deserters, of the dispositions made, and at the head of a few men had made a dash for the place where Teresa Madreno had gone for safety."

"Admiral John, reaching the mountain pass and blocking it effectively, received word from an exhausted fugitive that Rodriguez had made a successful surprise attack, had captured Gen. Madreno's daughter and put to death the guard with her, and was fortifying himself in a house back of the town which had been the scene of his victory."

"The lone sailor, humbly faithful to the beautiful woman who had saved his life, was filled with frantic despair at this news. He loved her. I dare say he would have lived and died without venturing to breathe his love. For he did not consider himself worthy to do more than serve her for the rest of his days—the days that she had given him to live and to serve her in."

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"The explosion came on the day when, after a particularly brilliant defeat of the Spanish troops, Admiral John was made a Colonel and raised to the Spanish rank. The infuriated Col. Jorge, meeting Admiral John in the street struck him in the face and called him one of those names which the Spanish tongue seems able to make particularly vile and atrocious."

"The enraged Rodriguez followed this up by drawing his pistol. Admiral John quietly wrested it from him, emptied it on the ground and handed it back."

"Within twenty-four hours Col. Jorge had asked for Teresa Madreno's hand, had been rejected and had withdrawn with some of his troops through deserters, of the dispositions made, and at the head of a few men had made a dash for the place where Teresa Madreno had gone for safety."

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He had almost completely disregarded that man's enmity. Had it been any one else who had subjected Dona Teresa to force and indignity Admiral John's anger would have been as great, and as dangerous."

"Putting a subordinate in command and leaving the principal part of the force at the pass in the mountains, Admiral John at the head of a flying detachment made his way very rapidly to the spot where Col. Jorge was exciting over his fair prisoner and making preparations to guard her. In doing this he was risking Gen. Madreno's displeasure, but he did not consider that there was no time to send for instructions."

"Admiral John reached the little town where Col. Jorge was in three days. The distance has never been made since in such time, even by the express trains of the Costa Blanca National Railway, which travel a slightly longer route at a snail's pace."

"Arriving at dawn after seventy-two hours without sleep he found the town with only a few scared inhabitants. Col. Jorge with his prisoner was in the house on a hillside a half mile distant. Rodriguez's men were busy building a palisade, but this fortification had not advanced very far. At the onset of Admiral John's men they broke and ran, although they outnumbered the attackers."

"It seemed as if nothing remained but for Admiral John to advance on the white walled, silent house within which were his benefactor and the traitor who had been her lover. But in the moment of the rout of Rodriguez's men a terrible sound like thunder was heard in the distance. A second later the earth quivered slightly under the feet of Admiral John's men as they pursued the fleeing enemy with triumphant yells."

"It was the tremor de tierra, the terrible, the familiar but ever terrifying phenomenon of the country—the earthquake. It was the beginning of the severest earthquake Costa Blanca has known in a century."

"The effect is always the same. Men seek the open. They drop whatever they are doing. In that awful moment of insecurity when the earth rocks there is no room for any other feeling than fear. The thought of victory perishes. Admiral John's men broke and fled side by side with their enemies, and both sets of men and animals soon open ground as long as the repeated trembling of the earth permitted them to stay upright."

"In a moment there were left on the scene only three people and two of them were invisible within that house, a little forlorn structure whose white walls already showed great cracks along their length."

"In the short pause between the sickening quivers Admiral John, sleepless, thwarted in the moment of success, full of love, anger and an overwhelming purpose, collected his senses, regained his feet and advanced toward the house."

"It had an air of ruin. The walls had settled so that neither door or window could be opened. A faint sound of some one beating against the walls came from the house. He seized her in his arms to bear her outside to safety."

"At last I am able to repay your kindness," he murmured softly. And she whispered, 'Always I have loved you, Juan.'

"It is I—Juan."

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"From within came a sudden snarl and a scream of rage."

"El Amante Juan! There's a bullet here for you, compadre," shrieked the voice of the insanely jealous Col. Jorge Rodriguez, between the rattle of thunder and the blows of the sailor's hammer against the welded door. 'A bullet for the Dona Teresa and a bullet for you. Come and receive it, oh scum of the ocean!'

"I am quite sure that Admiral John did not hesitate. There was no time to think before acting. Even if the madman Rodriguez was telling the truth, the sailor had no choice. Persons often recover from bullet wounds but the chances of recovery of one buried in the fall of a house are infinitesimal."

"With all his strength he smashed against the door, forcing it open at last. As he delivered the last stroke a pistol shot sounded."

"In a frenzy the sailor dashed inside. But Col. Jorge had been lying. There had been only one charge in his weapon and he had shot himself. 'Crouched in a corner of the room,

"At that instant came the second and severer shock. The sailor could not have done more than stagger a few steps toward the door when the sky changed color outside (so the natives insist to this day), turning purple and black, the earth gave a vast heave upward and the whole structure of the little house crumpled in an instant before the sight of Admiral John's fugitive soldiers, watching in terror from a distance."

"Juan and Dona Teresa were buried together in the collapse of the building. And as if to remove the last evidences of the sailor's romantic life and struggles, and love the earth opened slightly and the mass of adobe clay in which were joined the bodies of those two lovers sank from sight forever. There is something touching, as in a fable, in the story of that man who came out of the sea and vanished still more suddenly, his coming and going attended by cataclysms of nature in which story unfinished, his triumph unknown."

Sherwood sat a while in silence after

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KEEPING TIME AT THE SIGN OF THE SAILOR BOY

While the Chronometer Wars With the Wireless This Water Street Shop Still Sets the Hour for Hundreds of Ships

LOCKED away in Water street, in an atmosphere that still smacks of ship's stores and sea water, is the home of a concern which is among the world's most famous chronometer makers. Despite the changes about it the house stands much as it did sixty odd years ago when the fourth generation back established the business of making time for observatories and seagoing men."

For six decades and more they have worked patiently, persistently and successfully in the effort to make the chronometer a still more accurate means of measuring time. Mechanically this concern has done much to improve these delicate timepieces, and while fractions of a second are vital in the eyes of the firm, still experiments extending over periods of ten and twenty years have been looked upon with seeming indifference if at all, and it was possible to record a distinct advance."

The world over chronometers made in Water street are famous, and it is not unearned praise to say that the best of American chronometers are without their superiors. The industry would not be so successful if it had not depended upon the patronage alone of American shipping. On the shelves of this quaint shop are anywhere from 300 to 400 chronometers undergoing rating and repair, and until very lately the greater number by far of these instruments were from foreign vessels. The war in Europe has brought about the change, because the American flag is now seen more frequently upon the seas. Just the same, the manufacture of chronometers is a dwindling industry, and all because of the march of science. The home has been intimately associated with the history of American shipping. It saw our merchant fleets at the climax of their glory; it saw them fade well high away; and to-day the members of the firm wonder why the present animation is a wonder upon the horizon. One can therefore appreciate the fact that the firm is not only a business, but a tradition."

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long as the daily variation was consistent, each of the regularly allowed for with the passing of each twenty-four hours. The determination of this factor by the watch or chronometer maker is termed rating. This may be affected by various conditions and for that reason a careful skipper seldom will send his chronometer to sea without a chronometer to low and where from one to five seconds every twenty-four hours and the rate of that loss will increase as the run out deeper into the thin metal.

Changes in temperature used to be more serious in their effects until the metallurgist evolved a retractor alloy in place of steel for the spring of the vital balance. Palladium is one of these substances and before the chronometer makers would approve use they put it to a fifteen year test. Indeed they have to be conservative because after all the making of chronometers is something of a business gamble, especially so when dealing with the national authorities."

At the United States naval observatory in Washington all chronometers purchased for the Government are put through rigorous competitive trials before acceptance and these tests supplement the period of observation to which the instruments have been previously subjected by their makers. Chronometers are bought for Uncle Sam only after exacting examination and it is to the interest of the makers not to submit "green" instruments